Heart to Heart

An e-bulletin created especially for healthcare providers

In the News . . .

Frankie Muniz TIA a Call for Youth Stroke Awareness

The recent "mini-stroke" suffered by actor Frankie Muniz, highly covered by the media, has brought much attention to the prevalence of stroke among young adults and awareness to the risk of stroke at any age.

Prescription Labels Too Complex

A new study has confirmed that current prescription guides are too complex for patients, failing to meet readability guidelines. Researchers are working with the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality to help develop guidelines for medical organizations in making materials easier to understand.



Hookahs Just As Bad As Cigarettes

The growing popularity of hookah bars and cafes, especially among college-aged adults, has led to California public health officials to address the misconception that hookah smoking is safer than cigarette smoking because of the water filtration of the tobacco. The public awareness campaign aims to inform potential hookah smokers of the similar level of carcinogens in hookah smoke compared to cigarette smoke, with the potential for additional carcinogens and carbon monoxide due the burning of charcoal in hookahs.



Exercise Able to Lower Depression in Heart Failure Patients

A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that cardiac patients, especially those with heart failure, reported fewer symptoms of depression than patients who received standard care without exercise training.



All about Sodium . . .





In the light of some recently released reports stirring confusion on the efficacy of sodium reduction efforts, the American Heart Association has detailed new research whose results corroborate the adverse risk relationship between excess sodium and hypertension, providing an ongoing evidence base for sodium reduction efforts.

What about Stroke . . .

Aspirin Resistance May Lead to More Severe Stroke

A recent study by the Comprehensive Stroke Center in Australia found that among study participants, those with previous ischemic stroke and on aspirin therapy (at least 100mg daily) for at least five years, nearly 30% were aspirin resistant. Aspirin resistance was significantly linked to increased risk for larger, more severe strokes was greater than those without resistance. The study calls for increased research into alternative antiplatelet therapies to be used in lieu of aspirin for resistant patients to help mitigate stroke recurrence and severity.











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What about Heart Attack . . .



Shorter Hospital Stays Do Not Necessarily Increase Patient Mortality

Data from a recently concluded Veterans Affairs (VA) study, which analyzed more than four million admissions over 14 years, found that hospital length of stay (LOS) fell by an average of three days and rates for hospital readmission within 30 days fell by an average of 12% over the study period for myocardial infarction (MI) patients. Decreases were also seen for mean riskadjusted mean LOS for all admission causes. Additionally, such LOS and readmit reductions were accompanied by an all-cause mortality reduction of 3.4% at 30 days and 3.0 at 90 days.



The latest on Hypertension . . .



Team-based Approach Recommended by PRC Too

Ongoing research with the Prevention Research Centers (RPC) is finding that a team-based approach, as currently recommended by the Community Prevention Services Task Force, for hypertension care. The research is identifying improved means for patients to receive information, ask questions, and have care information reinforced, leading to greater potential for adherence and follow-up, through access to multiple health professionals as part of a coordinated care team.

BP Targets for Diabetics Raised

New guidelines from the American Diabetes Association (ADA) have raised the target systolic blood pressure from below 130mm Hg to below 140mm Hg, citing the negative trade-off in increased treatment burden for patients in attempting to reach the lower recommendation. Though the ADA does stress that readings below 130mm Hg are ideal if able to be achieved without "undue treatment burden".



JNC8 Update Still in Process

The eighth update to the Joint National Committee (JNC) guidelines on hypertension control expected to be release last year, is still in the review stages. According to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) status check, found here, the current status of the update is in draft finalization. An interview with Joseph Saseen, PharmD, following a special presentation at the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists annual midyear clinical meeting, details the current status of the update process and what changes clinicians may expect when the JNC 8 is finally released.



New Resources from the AMA





The American Medical Association (AMA) has unveiled a new training module to assist providers in both billing for and documenting preventative services, in keeping with Affordable Care Act requirements. The 10-15 minute training offers guidance in identifying services recommended by the US Preventative Services Task Force, when to use the CPT® modifier 33 in conjunction with preventive care, and provides examples of clinical scenarios and respective coding. The web training accompanies a convenient pocket reference guide. Click here for more info.





